

THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

Election 2020: What Is at Stake?

PRIMING THE PUMP: What is the most pressing issue for you in this election?

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF ELECTIONS

1. Be sure to vote, never underestimating the importance of your vote.
2. Do your homework in preparing to vote.
3. Identify and listen to trusted voices.
4. Value a measure of integrity in the candidates for whom you vote.
5. Keep St. Andrew's core values in mind as you vote: God care; Earth care, community care, neighbor care, and self-care.
6. Do not put absolute trust or invest unrealistic hope in any candidate, since all candidates are mortals (Psalm 146:3).
7. Vote for candidates who embrace the role of being a public servant.
8. Insist on a fair and just election process, but do not expect perfection. [*Would you rather cast lots as the disciples did?*] (Acts 1:26)
9. Be thinking about how you will engage in the political process after this election is concluded.
10. Consider impact of election on how the next generations will live.

NEW RESOURCE: *A Social Message on . . . "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy"*

(https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Government_and_Civic_Engagem ent_Social_Message.pdf?_ga=2.60870565.886645714.1602088435-551539439.1602088435)

1. Adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on June 24, 2020.
2. Social messages
 - a. Teaching documents of ELCA focused on particular social topics.
 - b. Intended to focus attention and urge action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to church and society.
 - c. Adopted by the Church Council by at least two thirds vote.

3. Social statements
 - a. More comprehensive documents developed via a five-year process led by a task force.
 - b. Adopted at churchwide assemblies by at least two thirds vote.

4. Basic points
 - a. Government is a gift from God intended for the safety and flourishing of human life (1).
 - b. Intended to do what churches, families, individuals cannot do on their own (3).
 - c. Civil government can be force for good or for evil—or, most accurately, both in some combination (4).
 - d. God’s two ways of working
 - i. Right hand: God instills faith in Jesus Christ to actively redeem those who recognize their sin and trust God’s promise.
 - ii. Left hand: God works through human roles, structures, and institutions to foster the well-being of the people and world God creates (5).
 - e. Human dignity means all persons have claim on the protection, care, and concern for equity that government should provide (7).
 - f. In evaluating government roles and functions the key question is: Is the neighbor being served? (9)
 - g. One way Christian vocation expressed is through dedicated, competent public service (10).
 - h. Citizenship honored and regulated by law—but not used to strip individual or group of dignity or human rights as neighbor (12).
 - i. Responsibility to raise our voices and votes against misuse of government (14)
 - j. Strongly affirms voting, guided by faith-based values, as an exercise in citizenship (16)
 - k. We may disagree about best ways to achieve public good, but we do not disagree about shared responsibility to seek it (17).

ANOTHER RESOURCE: Michael Cooper-White, “Discipleship in a Democracy,” *Living Lutheran*, October 2020, 16–21.

ELECTION 2020: WHAT IS AT STAKE? (Discussion)

1. What is your greatest hope in this election?
2. What is your greatest fear in this election?
3. What is the most pressing issue before us?